

Gutmann (E.)

A TREATISE

ON

BATHS AND VAPOR BATHS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

DR. E. GUTMANN,

PROPRIETOR OF THE RUSSIAN AND TURKISH MARBLE BATHS,

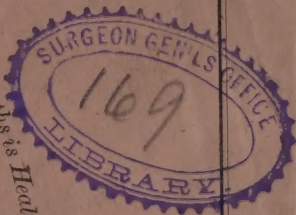
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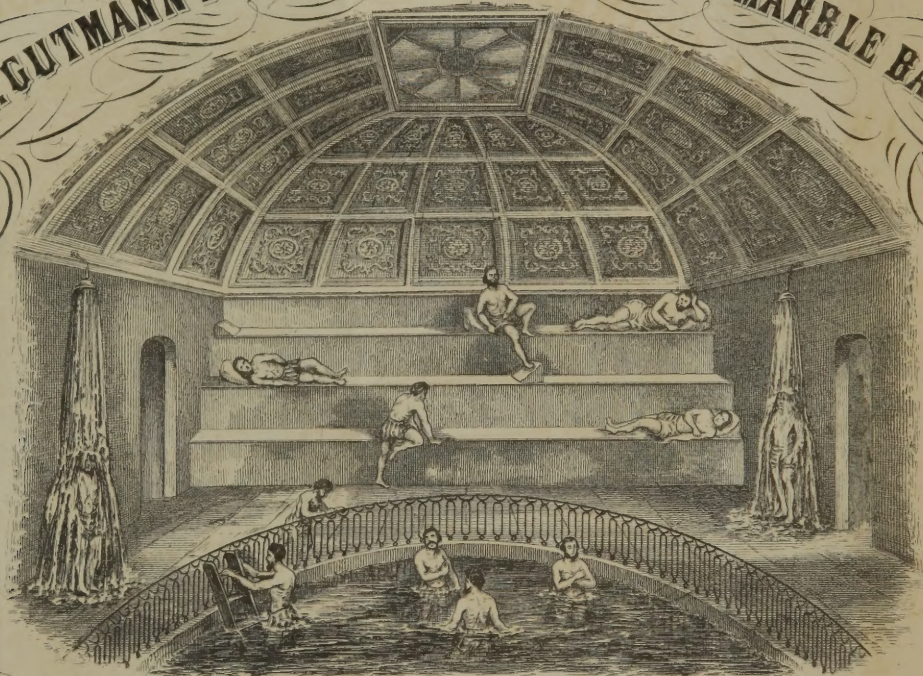


NEW YORK

KOPPEL BROTHERS, PRINTERS.

11 ANN STREET.

DR. GUTMANN'S RUSSIAN AND TURKISH MARBLE BATHS.



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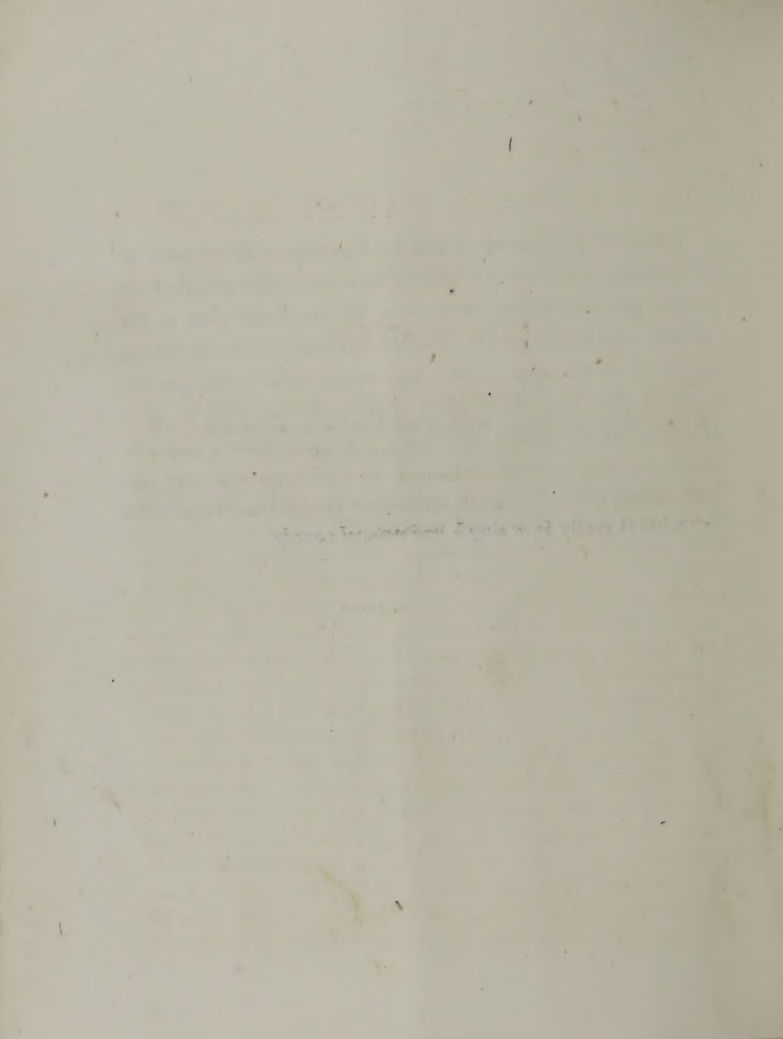
Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1863,

BY DR. E. GUTMANN.

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the
Southern District of New York.



The following remarks, in popular language, with omission of all technical terms, are intended to show the perfect security from danger and the salutary effects of a *Russian Vapor Bath* to the greater mass of the people, who are still considering the taking of a bath of this kind a great and daring undertaking, and are thus, *to their own disadvantage*, frightened from using it. It is likewise hoped, that the description of it which follows, may contribute to remove many unclear ideas, which are still very current among the public, and to represent the Russian Vapor Bath as, what it really is, *a simple and natural remedy*.



BATHS AND VAPOR BATHS.

INTRODUCTION.

"THE desire of perpetual youth," ably remarks the celebrated Hufeland, author of the famous Macrobiotic (art of prolonging life), "is the most beautiful I know of. The bath, if it fails to make our youth perpetual, can at least prolong it. For, by keeping the solid parts of the body soft and flexible, and making the joints supple, it is ever powerfully counteracting that creeping sickness, which we call old age, and which gives notice of its approach in the stiffness and shrunken proportion of the limbs. In the bath we have the very best means of neutralizing this baneful influence of our variable climate and of our mode of life, and of restoring what those enemies of our health have vitiated." These are the golden words of the old and experienced physician, although they are so little regarded, and still less carried into the practice. Though long years have passed since physicians and instructors, nay, even philanthropists and economists, have begun to commend the bath, and with ever increasing earnestness, in order to produce a healthier and more vigorous race than the present scrofulous one, all their efforts have been, in the main, fruitless. The bath, at least among Europeans, is yet an article of luxury, of

which the great mass of the people are altogether deprived. With what sovereign contempt does the European, pluming himself upon his high civilization, look down upon the poor Orientals, who nevertheless are far in advance of him in the matter of personal cleanliness. In their view, to bathe is as necessary as to eat. How different is the case with us? How many thousands are there, who go to their graves without having ever experienced the benefits of the bath, except, perhaps, the one they received on coming into the world? And even this here, in America, is denied to the majority of infants. To bathe a new-born child, appears, in the eyes of many of our American ladies, to be something dreadful. It might get drowned in the bathing-tub! and then, besides, it is such a great trouble! And German mothers, too, who, in their own country, were accustomed to give frequent baths during the first months to their young infants, soon become Americanized in this particular. They find it so much easier with a cloth and a little water, to quickly rub the little stranger, and with all speed to swathe it in the customary long fancy dresses.

In all this there is no thought of the mucous and other substances adhering to every child at birth, and which remain in the skin; and if afterwards some of these parts get diseased and the child whines in pain, all possible reasons are sought after, viz.: impurity of the blood, milk too rich, etc., without even a suspicion of the chief cause, viz.: that the child was never properly cleaned.

Is it, then, to be wondered at, that such children should carry in them the seeds of disease, and grow up a languid and debilitated race? And all from this total neglect of the most important and most comprehensive organ of the human body.

BATHING IN ANCIENT AND IN MODERN TIMES.

Far different was the practice of the ancients in this matter. Among the Greeks and Romans the bath, next to gymnastic exercises, was prized as the chief means, not only to keep the body healthy and vigorous, but also to bestow on it a fine and blooming appearance. For among the ancients a beautiful and noble form was a matter of far more consequence than with us. Indeed, we can see how indispensable bathing became for the Romans, from the fact, that even on the confines of the Empire baths were erected for the especial use of the Roman legions, the ruins of which are to be found even at this day at Wiesbaden, Neuwied, etc. No less were the ancestors of the Germans, especially in the middle ages, fond of, and assiduous in the use of the bath; and at that time it became so universal in Germany, that public baths were to be met with in the smallest towns. Immorality, however, gradually getting the upperhand in these, public baths in the Fatherland fell into disuse, and people went to the other extreme, and did not bathe at all. And so it has continued till our time. In no part of Europe, outside of Russia, is the bath at the present day a popular institution. Of late years, in some of the larger cities of Europe, they are beginning again to erect bathing establishments. But how poor and insignificant do they appear alongside those of ancient Rome—those grand structures, furnished in the highest degree of luxuriousness, such as the baths of Caracalla, Titus, etc., in which 3000 persons could bathe at the same time. Rome possessed twelve of these vast public baths for the use of the general public, and had besides 800 private baths. Just so will great bathing establishments exist among us,

whenever the need of bathing will become general among the people, and their urgency in the matter will secure the outlay for such institutions from being void of an adequate return.

THE SKIN.

How comes it, however, that this need has not sprung up long ago? Perhaps from a prevalent idea that our skin is not deserving of any special attention and care? So at least, it would appear—for in very truth, no other organ of our bodies meets with so much abuse and neglect as the skin. If a young lady has a decaying tooth, she speeds straightway to the dentist to have it replaced by a new and more presentable one. Does a bachelor, in his manly prime, detect some incipient gray hairs in his beard, he quickly betakes himself to the hair-dresser to have the corpus delicti at once removed. But for the skin, there is no such considerate anxiety. It is doing a great deal, persons may think, to wash every day the face and hands, the parts which, being uncovered, are visible to every one; but to cleanse thoroughly the rest of the body, *but once a week*, is deemed hardly worth the trouble. Every Sunday we put on clean, fresh clothing, but to clean and purify every Sunday the natural garment, which envelops the whole body—our skin—is, for the majority of persons, too inconvenient a matter. The reason of this lies probably in the fact, that most people are ignorant of the nature and importance of the skin, and have never taken the trouble to give it a serious thought.

STRUCTURE OF THE SKIN.

Suppose you take a small piece of the skin and look at it through a magnifying glass. What innumerable little

openings are there brought to view! These are the so-called pores (a term often used, but little understood), the outlets of those two millions minute tubes, the so-called perspiratory or sweat glands, which perforate the entire skin. So, too, in the skin we find another species of those diminutive ducts or canals, which are known as sebaceous glands. If the skin be rubbed a little, you will perceive something disengaged from it, which looks like scum or dirt, and is by many erroneously so considered. But this reputed dirt is nothing more or less than a part of the upper stratum or coating of our true skin, which is called epidermis or cuticle or scarf skin, and which is detached in washing, in order to form anew and continuously. And if, besides this, we direct attention to those countless blood-vessels and nerves, which course through and permeate the firm, elastic skin, we cannot fail to discover in it a most artistic structure.

FUNCTIONS OF THE SKIN.

Let us now briefly analyze the functions of these several glands, blood-vessels, etc., so that all may know the important office, which our skin performs, when, mark well, it is kept pure and clean. As has been remarked above, the skin contains blood-vessels, and that too in extraordinary quantity, all of them mostly as fine as a hair, (hence their name, capillary (hair) vessels,) and clearly discernible under a magnifying glass. Through these vessels the blood, the life-sap, circulates, and its office is to nourish the skin; for to whatever part of the body the blood is not conducted, that part decays and dies. A great portion of the blood consists of water. This so-called blood-water (serum) is constantly oozing from the capillary vessels, and so thoroughly does it moisten the

skin, that it may be likened to a water-soaked sponge. Part of this water, imperceptibly to us, is constantly evaporating from the surface of our skin. About 30 ounces of it, it has been computed, evaporates every 24 hours. By this process, quite a quantity of matter, no longer of any use, is removed from the body. Moreover, besides thus giving out that moistening fluid by means of *imperceptible* evaporation, the skin also emits it in the *sensible* or *perceptible* form of sweat. This latter obtrudes itself in small drops upon the skin, and this takes place by means of the so-called sweat glands. The sweat consists mainly of water, but it also contains various other substances, as (common) salt, etc., and by means of it, too, much effete matter is cast off from the body. In addition to this, one may notice, that the skin in many places has an oily feeling. The fatty substance which causes this sensation, comes from the sebaceous glands. Thus, we can see that through the skin much and various matter is ejected from the body. Its functions, however, are not confined simply to ejecting matter to the surface, but it has besides the faculty of absorbing (soaking up) substances, especially fluids. Place, for instance, a man in a bath and let him remain there for some time, and he will be found to weigh more when taken out than when put in. Let a person be wrapped in sheets that have been dipped in wine, and the very same symptoms will be observable as if he drank the wine. Even thirst can be appeased by enwrapping a person in wet cloths, and nourishment conveyed to the body, when it is placed in a bath in which wine, broth or other substances are added. These facts go to show, that the skin absorbs these substances. It is, therefore, not only an organ of *secretion*, but an organ of *absorption* as well. It is, moreover, the

protecting organ of our bodies, and especially the upper stratum or so-called scarf skin, which wards off many noxious influences, as for example, that of corrosive substances. It guards us, likewise, against sudden changes of temperature. Finally, the skin is the organ of *Touch*. The innumerable nerves, which are dispersed through it, are alive to the slightest irritation upon it, and carry it to the brain, which in turn conveys it to our consciousness, that is, *makes us feel it*.

It is clear, therefore, that the skin can develop its full activity only, when it is in its truly natural state, that is, when perfectly cleansed, and the sweat-pores and sebaceous glands are unobstructed. Whenever this is neglected, its functions are only partially performed, and when very unclean, its activity almost wholly ceases.

IMPURE SKIN AND ITS ILL EFFECTS.

Let us once regard the many impurities that collect on the skin of an uncleanly person. First, there is the outer coating of the so-called scarf skin, which the man of cleanly habits removes by washing himself every morning, as new coatings are constantly forming in the place of this wasted and useless one. Again, the sweat, with its various ingredients (salts, etc.), dries upon the skin, and so too that fat, oily matter which comes from the sebaceous glands. Add to these three substances the dirt and dust from the streets, from our garments, etc., which in the skin of every man settles, and in the case of very many occupations, collects in large quantities—one can well imagine, how these substances very soon would pretty largely adhere to the skin, as during one or more days it secretes much sweat, oily matter, etc. What will be the consequence? The ducts of the sweat and seba-

aceous glands become obstructed by these accumulated, useless substances, and of course the skin can no longer perform its functions, that is, the evaporation of those watery elements, not any more needed in our system, ceases, and the secretion of sweat is prevented, and at the same time the functions of the sebaceous glands ceases. The skin, otherwise so pliable and soft, becomes dry and choppy. So important secretions being checked, there remains in the blood a quantity of effete matters, which used to be removed and must be so still. The retention of these substances cannot but act injuriously upon the body and give rise to many complaints. It is thus patent to every one, how detrimental it is to omit the proper care of the skin—how, from a neglected skin not only peculiar diseases of the same arise, but even the blood itself becomes disordered, and thus occasions complaints which affect various parts of the body. It is a well known fact, that from a cold, that is, from a sudden check of the perspiration of the skin, often the most dangerous maladies arise; how much more must this be the case, when by continuous uncleanness the activity of the skin is systematically checked and in part even annihilated. Thus it is, that many persons cannot account for their getting this or that sickness; and many others complain to their physician: "Doctor, it is strange, that, do what I will, I cannot bring out perspiration." But only look for a moment at your skin a little more carefully, and ask yourselves how often you have given it a thorough cleansing, and you will soon, perhaps, solve the mystery. Many a belle torments the physician to procure a fresh complexion; half an apothecary shop is laid under contribution by the vexed man, in the shape of beautifying powders and cosmetics, but he unfor-

unately forgets to recommend to the fair patient, before all else, often and carefully to ply the skin with soap and water.

The question now arises, what is the best way to care for the skin, and secure its sound and healthy action? The answer is short and conclusive—by the *use of water and watery vapor*, that is, of the *bath and vapor-bath*.

THE WARM BATH.

Every man of ordinary cleanliness is accustomed to wash himself every day, but custom has confined this ablution to the face and hands, as if the use of soap and water were a luxury for the other parts of the body. Still, were a person to wash often even the whole body, the purpose in view to keep a pure skin, one capable of performing the functions mentioned above, would be far from being attained. Only the warm bath can effect this, not however so completely as the vapor-bath. For, though the former may cleanse the skin and make it soft and pliable, there are yet many substances settling in it, which cannot be removed sufficiently well by the use of simple soap and water; because they frequently require for their solution and emmollition a higher temperature than is to be attained in the warm bath. The ordinary warm bath softens the scarf skin, opens the pores, and makes the skin disposed to throw out the unserviceable matters from the inner parts of the body, and in turn to absorb other matters. In the same way it increases the circulation of the blood. On the other hand, it has the great disadvantage of relaxing too much the cuticle, and, indeed, the whole body, and of making them very susceptible of a change of weather and disposed to take cold,

so that when the weather is unfavorable, and especially when cold, one needs the greatest prudence in the use of it.

THE VAPOR BATH.

These disadvantages of the warm bath are avoided in the use of the vapor bath, which at the same time unites all the benefits of the former. Dust, sweat or any other substance whatever, accumulated on the skin, even for years, and obstructing the pores, cannot withstand the effect of hot vapor, and of the ablutions, frictions and brushings that accompany the use of the (Russian) vapor bath. These accretions soon become loosened, softened and removed, the pores opened, and the long suppressed activity of the skin again restored. A remedy, that produces such powerful effects, is well worth our more especial consideration, that we may understand *why* and *how* it operates.

HOW THE VAPOR BATH OPERATES.

Our body perspires always if the temperature of the air is increased: for instance, on warm summer days. Therefore, if we artificially produce a high temperature, by filling up an enclosed room with vapor, we are enabled to procure soon a copious perspiration. If one enters in such a room, he soon feels on his skin an increased sensation of heat. As above mentioned, the skin is interwoven with innumerable fine blood-vessels, supplying with blood every space of it. In consequence of the stimulating action of the hot vapor on the skin, the afflux of blood to those minute capillaries is greatly increased. They *become better filled with blood and bulge out*; the watery part of the blood, if the body has its usual temperature, is emitted from those vessels and moistens the

skin; it now oozes quite freely in the skin, out of the overfilled vessels, and comes out by way of the perspiratory glands in the form of perspiration. So we have as the first effect of the vapor, an increased flow of blood and humor to the skin, and as a consequence of this *fullness, redness and profuse perspiration*. By the rushing of so much blood to the surface of the body, the afflux of it to the internal organs is reduced. It is therefore clear, that the vapor bath affords *a vigorous remedy to draw the blood from the internal organs to the surface*. Of course, these efforts can only be obtained, if the skin is in its natural state, that is, if the pores are unobstructed. But if they are closed, no copious perspiration will break out; nor can the overstocked blood-vessels be relieved, as those various substances which, usually in form of sweat, are thrown out on the surface, still remain in the blood. In consequence of this, the blood, which had rushed freely to the minute vessels of the skin, tries to find an outlet by flowing back to the internal parts of the body, from which cause an excessive accumulation of blood (congestion) may easily be produced. To prevent such an accident, in the Russian vapor bath every bather is washed with soap, and then rubbed all over with a soaped brush. By such means, all superfluous substances accumulated on the skin, which had already been softened by the action of the hot vapor, are perfectly disengaged and removed, and the pores opened. The skin, too, becomes now very susceptible for the operation of the vapor on it, and congestions to the internal organs are prevented. In spite of this, a slight congestion to the brain sometimes occurs; for the blood in its vessels can not quick enough balance that which circulates in the external parts of the body. But this congestion disappears

as soon as the bather washes his head with cold water. Besides this, in the vapor bath, the circulation of the blood is increased in all blood-vessels of the body, and in consequence of it, the pulse quickened. *Thus the vapor bath, by producing a great afflux of humors to the surface, and by discharging them, in the form of sweat, through the skin from the body, affords us the means to remove out of the body a great amount of superfluous humors; by the removal of which, we may produce a better mixture of the blood and humors, and in consequence of this, an improvement of the whole constitution.*

COLD WATER IN THE VAPOR BATH.

We are, furthermore, enabled to increase, artificially, the production of sweat produced by the (Russian) vapor bath, and this is effected by the application of cold water. When, for instance, the bather is exposed for a considerable time to the hot vapor, the skin becomes at last so accustomed to this stimulant, that no more fresh blood is drawn to it, and of course no noticeable production of sweat can take place. To avoid this, and especially when the physician deems it necessary to produce repeatedly a very profuse sweat, recourse is taken to cold water as to a *new stimulant*. This stimulates the skin to *contract itself*. With intense cold, for instance, the skin contracts itself and forms the so-called goose (corrugated) skin. The same thing takes place when cold water is poured upon a sweating body: the capillaries of the skin are suddenly contracted and the blood they contain is driven to the internal organs. Let now the body, after a cold affusion, be exposed again to the operation of the hot vapor, and the blood, that just has been artificially driven within, rushes again suddenly to the surface, and even stronger

than before, and the production of sweat begins anew. This procedure can be repeated several times; of course, its operation is regulated according to the present condition of the patient, as for every one a special treatment is requisite. On this account, it is a matter of necessity that the (Russian) vapor bath should be taken only under the direction of a physician, as he alone is competent to give proper directions in every special case, in reference to temperature, affusions, etc.

The *cold affusions*, in the form of showers and douches, have yet a more special utility. The skin, for instance, becomes used to a rapid change of temperature by means of this alternate operation of the hot vapor and cold water, and its fibrous tissue from the effect of the cold is made denser and more vigorous. This invigorating and hardening of the skin is of great value, especially in our unsteady climate, as by means of it we render our bodies insusceptible to the change of weather.

Nor should we leave unsaid, that the vapor does not operate on the outer skin alone, but penetrates as well the frontal and nasal cavities, also the larynx and the ramifications of the bronchial tubes, and produces similar symptoms upon the mucous membranes that line them; hence it is, that for maladies that attack these organs, the vapor bath is an excellent remedy.

The use of the Russian vapor bath is twofold, according as *healthy* persons use it as a hygienic remedy, or the *sick* for the healing of a, by no means, inconsiderable number of disorders.

THE VAPOR BATH AS A PRESERVATIVE OF HEALTH.

Let us first consider the vapor bath as a hygienic remedy. As we have above remarked, it increases the tone

of the skin, and accustoms it to any change of temperature. *We are therefore enabled, by the regular use of the vapor bath, to harden our bodies to such a degree, as to enable them easily to withstand the adverse influence of our variable climate*—of the sharp east and north-east winds, and thus prevent many diseases. We can, besides, by the vapor bath, very easily remove slight *colds*, and obviate thus effectually their transition into more serious complaints. So, too, when one feels languid and depressed from too great bodily exertion, or from a night spent in debauch, by taking a vapor bath with cold showers, the fatigue will give place to a feeling of comfort and invigoration; mind and body both share the freshening influence. Several are yet of opinion that much sweating must debilitate; but let one try a (Russian) vapor bath, and he will be convinced of quite the opposite. There is a feeling of cheerfulness and elasticity after it, and a general sensation of comfort takes possession of our whole body. It is a well-known fact that those who have for a considerable time used the Russian bath, cannot dispense with it—it has become to them a necessity, in order to conserve their health. Hence, too, it comes, that in Russia vapor baths are a popular necessity; rich and poor, young and old make use of them once or more times a week; and it must be admitted, that this general use of a remedy, operating so energetically upon the invigoration of a whole people, produces the most favorable contrast with the effeminating and relaxing Turkish bath, which is enervating and debilitating the Orientals, and makes them an easy prey to their Russian neighbors.

THE VAPOR BATH AS A REMEDY IN DISEASE.

The vapor bath is used as a remedy for many chronic

diseases, where we wish, by means of an increased activity of the skin, and the elimination of certain substances from the body effected thereby, to promote the *renovation* and assimilation of animal matter, and thus effect the healing of the sick body. It is especially to the following maladies that the Russian bath has been applied with wonderful success for many years past:

1. To *Rheumatism*—this most obstinate of all evils, which often defies all the efforts of the physician. Here the help afforded by the vapor bath is oftentimes surprising and speedy, and as a general thing it is frequently the only remedy to effectually heal the disorder.

2. In *Gout* it has been applied with no less success. The same may be said of

3. *Paralysis* and *Neuralgia*, which have been caused by suppressed perspiration, especially when they develop themselves in the fearfully painful *face-ache* or *head-ache* (facial and cranial neuralgia,) or even *Rheumatic tooth-ache*

4. *Cutarrhs*, particularly the so-called *Rheum*, are for the most part very quickly healed by the use of the Russian bath, even when of long standing. The same may be said of deep settled *hoarseness*.

5. In the case of chronic cutaneous diseases the vapor bath seems to be almost a *specific* remedy, inasmuch as they almost wholly yield to it. The *vapor bath in addition gives a fair complexion*.

6. In *Dyspepsia*, the vapor bath has been proved highly beneficial; the appetite becomes more natural, the power of digestion is increased, the complexion improved.

It has likewise been applied with most favorable results to *asthma*, *piles*, *venereal* and *mercurial affections*, *dropsy*, *scrofula*, inveterate ulcers on the legs, and also in the

case of unusual dilatation of the veins, which attack many persons in the feet, especially those who stand much. In these cases, the vapor bath operates by increasing the circulation of the blood, that has stagnated in the veins.

THE TIME FOR BATHING.

It is quite indifferent at what hour of the day the bath should be taken. As a general rule, a person should bathe whenever he feels that he can yield himself with tranquillity of mind to the full enjoyment of the bath—therefore, after his occupation of the day has ceased. *But never take a bath with an empty stomach—take a light lunch half an hour before.* For many persons, it is expedient to bathe towards evening; for after a bath at that time, a delightful feeling of repose and comfort spreads over the whole body, and carries with it a soft and undisturbed night's rest. How desirable this is for many an invalid—they are the best judges, who have passed many a night of pain and restlessness.

And here we may take occasion to combat a very general prejudice: Most persons imagine, that they should not bathe in autumn and winter, as after a sweat bath in these seasons of the year, one may catch cold very easily. This is a very great error—just the reverse is the case. The vapor bath, as we have shown above, strengthens the skin and makes it less susceptible of cold, from the fact that it increases its tone. After such a bath, therefore, a person may confidently expose himself to the influence of the outside air, and even to the most unfavorable weather, especially if after leaving the bathing establishment he gives his body some moderate exercise. Indeed, it is precisely in the winter and fall, that the sweat bath is by all means to be recommended, as in those sea-

sons the activity of the skin, by reason of the moist and damp atmosphere, is very greatly impeded, and hence, to give it a higher degree of activity, operates the more beneficially upon the whole organism.

DURATION AND TEMPERATURE OF THE BATH.

The duration of the bath must vary according to the condition of the bather. A weak and sickly body will endure it but a short time at first, and so, too, he should begin with tepid instead of cold affusions. If the bather possesses a somewhat vigorous frame, he can remain a longer time in the bath, say a half hour or even an hour, taking the cold shower and douche bath several times, and immersing himself in the cold water basin. So, too, the temperature of the bath is modified according to the habit and strength of the bather. It is, therefore, very necessary, that the physician in charge of the establishment should give to the attendants minute instructions for the treatment of each individual invalid. In general, it is a safe rule for the bather to remain in the vapor bath so long, as the sensation of comfort continues, and to leave it, when a feeling of exhaustion comes over him. To drink some tumblers full of water during the bath, is also to be recommended, as it promotes perspiration. Such invalids, as suffer from obstinate maladies, as cutaneous or rheumatic diseases, are to be wrapped, after the bath, in woolen blankets, and then undergo for a half an hour or an hour a hearty second sweating. After the bath, the body is soundly rubbed with linen towels, after which the bather dresses and reposes for a while in a room specially adapted for this purpose.

The *cold affusions*, applied in the Russian bath, excited the greatest opposition, when this was first introduced into

Germany. Professional and non-professional men predicted the most horrible consequences, for instance, even sudden death by apoplexy and such like. *But, for fifty years these baths have been in use there, without a single catastrophe of the kind*, whilst thousands have sought and found their lost health in them. Much less has any such calamity happened in Russia, where millions of persons use the vapor bath every day. Such facts speak for themselves, and give the death blow to all theoretic arguments to the contrary. For the rest, the careful reader, who bears in mind what was said above upon the subject of cold affusions, can explain, without need of any further disquisition, that their influence upon the body is not only not injurious, but in the highest degree beneficial. It was necessary, however, specially to draw attention to this matter, as even yet there are a great many persons who are seized with a panic, when they hear of cold water poured upon a sweating body.

As a general thing, the Russian vapor baths, as is the case with all reforms, raised considerable opposition, as well with physicians as with the public in general. It was, however, this very opposition that stimulated the advocates of the new remedy to greater zeal (in its vindication), and at the present day, we do not find a scientific physician who does not acknowledge its therapeutical efficacy in certain diseases. Numerous and grand results, confirmed by the experience of long years, have at length silenced all opposition. Notwithstanding this, it cannot be denied, that yet more salutary effects could be obtained from the Russian baths, if they were critically and more frequently applied and tested in the case of several other diseases besides those mentioned above, and if their hygienic application were brought into more general use.

Used throughout Eastern Europe as a popular remedy, they contribute essentially to form a sound and vigorous race; if applied generally amongst other nations, they could likewise exercise a regenerating influence.

Opinions of the Press.

DESCRIPTION OF DR. GUTMANN'S RUSSIAN VAPOR BATH.

(From the N. Y. Sunday Staats-Zeitung, Aug 31st, 1862.)

The most of our readers have, in all probability, never seen a Russian vapor bath, and therefore can form no proper idea of it. We will endeavor here to give them a brief description of it. We will take as our model the one lately erected by Dr. Gutmann at 373 Fourth Street, between Broadway and the Bowery, *as it surpasses in elegance and completeness of arrangements the most of such establishments.**

On the first floor you enter, first of all, into a large and elegant parlor, which is assigned for ladies to rest on coming from the bath. From this apartment a spacious stairway conducts to another lower part, of which the front part serves as a sitting-room for gentlemen, and is fitted up with commodious velvet cushions and sofas. After the bath, of course, every one feels the need of a little rest, and in this place every opportunity is afforded for gentlemen to take a comfortable full-length rest upon

* The establishment is under the personal inspection and direction of Dr. Gutmann who has been for a number of years a practising physician in this city. Dr. Gutmann is a graduate of the celebrated University of Berlin.

soft pillows for a half hour or so, and if they choose, in the midst of the aromatic odor of a fine Havana segar, they can give themselves up to philosophic reflections upon the beneficial effects of a Russian bath. Such as prefer the more sober realities to philosophy, may read the daily journals. At the back part of this are erected a series of small and tasteful dressing-rooms, each one provided with a soft, comfortable seat, and all the ordinary requirements of the toilette. Here the bather undresses, wraps himself in the bathing-mantle, and goes at once to the bath-room—passing through another room, furnished with beds for the process of the second sweating. At the entrance of the bath-room the mantle is laid aside. There is a slight feeling of oppression, that seizes one the first moment he gets enveloped in the vapor which fills the bathing-room, but after a few seconds he breathes freer, and may contemplate with curiosity this place, consecrated to the welfare of humanity.

Indeed it would be a difficult thing to find anywhere, so elegant a bathing-room; for in most establishments of the kind, the bare necessities are all that one meets. Here, however, along with the useful, the beautiful has been looked after. The room is quadrangular in form, and covered with a vaulted roof, of which the whole interior is beautifully frescoed, thus giving a pleasant impression to the eye. Besides the several side-windows, a stained glass window in the centre of the roof throws a soft light into the room. At both sides benches are erected, one above the other, upon which the bathers recline, beginning with the lowermost, as the temperature there is lower, and then upon the higher ones. At both sides there is a tepid shower, and near it a door which opens to a small apartment, in which a powerful cold shower

and douche bath pour their salutary streams upon the bather. Along the walls of the principal room there are a great number of India-rubber hose, each with the proper appliances to direct and concentrate upon particular parts of the body affected by disease, not only cold and warm water, but also hot vapor. Finally, in the centre is a large marble basin, surrounded by a neat iron railing; this is filled with cold water, and is deep and broad enough to allow some swimming exercises. Let us now suppose the bather entering upon the process and taking his place upon the first tier of benches. At once the active attendant places near him a small, commodious pail of cold water and a sponge, with which to wash and cool the head, and also to hold the saturated sponge under the nose, a process in the highest degree refreshing to those who take the bath for the first time. After a few minutes he ascends to the second tier, when the attendant soaps the whole body, rubs it well, and pours over it some few pails of tepid water.

The body is then rubbed for a time with a flesh-brush, well soaped and adapted for the special purpose, and, if necessary, undergoes a kneading process. After that the attendant takes a bundle of leafy birch-twigs and strikes and lashes the body. These frictions especially contribute to conduct to the capillary vessels of the skin a greater supply of blood. The invalid bather is now brought under the tepid showers. Those of more vigorous health recline on the third tier, where the highest temperature prevails, and after that go under the cold shower—or the still more powerful douche-bath, and thence into the basin, and repeat at pleasure frequently the same procedure.

If some special action upon particular parts or mem

bers of the body is desirable, the attendant, under the advice of the physician in charge, directs upon the parts affected, by means of the India-rubber hose, cold or warm water, and also hot vapor for a longer or shorter time, as the case may require. In this way the physician has it in his power, to produce a very powerful reaction in particular parts. When the bather has gone through these procedures, he passes into the room just adjoining the bath-room, where there are a number of beds. There he is enveloped in heavy, woolen blankets, and remains there for half an hour or an hour. A salutary perspiration now spreads over the whole body, so profuse indeed, as sometimes even to penetrate the bed-clothes. After this the bather has again cold or tepid water showered over him. He then betakes himself, refreshed and strengthened, to his dressing-room, and thence, after dressing, to the sitting-room, where he reclines for a half hour or so. Such persons as use the bath merely for invigorating and conserving their health, or as a luxury and for pleasure, do not, of course, need this second sweating in blankets.

It is very clear that precautions must be used against taking cold, especially in the winter season. For this purpose the temperature in the several rooms must be differently regulated. For instance, the room for the second sweating must have a much higher temperature than the dressing-rooms; these, in turn, have a higher temperature than the sitting-room, where the temperature is lowest, so that the bather may be fully cooled off, when, after his short stay there, he goes into the outer air. This arrangement likewise exists in the newly erected establishment at 373 Fourth Street, where all the demands, made by physicians on a scientific establish-

ment of this kind, are satisfied, and where nothing is wanting, as regards elegance and comfort, to meet the full satisfaction and gratification of the bathing-world.

Extract from the N. Y. Times, February 25, 1862.

THE RUSSIAN VAPOR BATH.—No branch of science has made more rapid progress, nor more useful discoveries than the medical art. Diseases which were formerly considered incurable, are now treated with success, and many of them have entirely disappeared. Those of the skin which had so long resisted the most strenuous efforts of the practitioner, are now cured by a rational and persevering attention to cleanliness, by means of the shower-bath, horse-hair gloves and flesh-brushes; but rheumatism has hitherto defied the skill and science of the physician. The patient and learned German doctors were the first to observe the curious fact, that the population of Russia are free from that painful disease, in a climate which is so favorable to its development. They reflected on the *raisonne* of the custom of rolling in the snow after taking a warm bath, and they studied the scientific effects of the Russian Vapor-Bath—opening the pores and obliging the system to throw off the injurious humors by exposing the body to steam and then to the bracing effects of a cold shower-bath. Being convinced of the wonderful and miraculous results obtained by this complex but easy remedy, they propagated it in Western Europe, where its application has become universal, so much so, that the most celebrated physicians recommend it in all cases of rheumatismal affection, both chronic and accidental. We have often wondered that it had not been more generally adopted in our own country, where so many are martyrs to diseases of the articulations and muscles, and were agreeably surprised, on becoming acquainted with Dr. GUTMANN'S establishment, to find that he had devoted his talents and his fortune to its propagation amongst us. Dr. GUTMANN has introduced the comfort and elegance to be found in similar establishments in Europe, and has made his baths a place of popular resort.

Extract from the Evening Post, January 20, 1863.

THE RUSSIAN BATH.—The vapor-bath has been a favorite

hygienic resource in the north of Europe for many years; its efficacy in certain diseases and its salutary influence, when judiciously used, as a means of preserving health, have long been recognized by the faculty; but its use in this country, where the prevalence of rheumatic and neuralgic affections make the vapor-bath specially desirable, has been limited by the fear of taking cold in a climate liable to such extreme and sudden variations of temperature. This objection to the use of steam as a means of purification, and as a recuperative agent, is removed by the Russian Bath, where friction, and the cold douche and plunge obviate the conditions by which the human system is made sensitive to cold on account of open pores and a sensitive skin. The safety curative, and conservative influences of the Russian Bath have long been established in Europe; and there is now a prospect of the successful introduction of this valuable sanitary institution here. Dr. Edward Gutmann, a Prussian Physician of experience, has opened a Russian Bath at No. 373 Fourth Street, in this city. The arrangements are neat and commodious, and the attendance excellent. Some of our invalid friends speak highly of the establishment and its proprietor. We commend both to the attention of the faculty and the public.

Translated from the N. Y. Staats-Zeitung, January 18, 1863.

ON BATHING DURING THE WINTER SEASON.—What! Bathe in Winter? Thus many exclaim, and feel a cold shudder coming over them. Why not? Does our body during the winter need less of cleanliness than during the other seasons of the year? Shall we allow perspiration together with other impurities to accumulate there for months, till the pores are completely obstructed, and thus lay the foundation to a variety of diseases? For it is a fact, that many cutaneous eruptions—and other diseases arise from a neglected care for the skin, inasmuch as many useless substances of the blood, which in case of a clean skin are secreted through the pores (perspiration, sweat, &c.), are retained in an unclean one, the pores of which are closed and thus give rise to many disorders. A calamity of this kind can only be averted through the most careful attention to the skin. But in this respect, unfortunately, many sins are committed. For all other enjoyments money is freely spent; but, from time to time, to

spend a few shillings for the luxury of a good bath, in order to conserve our health, most people still consider a mere waste of money.

How few are there, who, even during the hottest part of the summer, when heat and perspiration almost imperiously demand a bath, by regular bathing refresh and strengthen their body and mind? Most people shun the small outlay for what they term a luxury; to others it is not convenient to go to a bathing establishment after their day's work is done. Thus it happens, that many thousands throughout the whole year do not thoroughly cleanse their bodies. We should preach to deaf ears, would we recommend to this class of our citizens, to bathe even during the cold season of the year. But, on the other hand, we desire briefly to show to those of our readers, for whom the culture of their skin and body is an object of care, and therefore bathing a necessity, how they may obtain this luxury without injury to their health, even in the winter season. Of course, if one should take a plain cold bath in a bathing-tub, it would do more harm than good, as the body would cool off too much. Moreover, there are but few persons, who through long continued habit have become so hardy, that they may take such a bath with impunity. An ordinary warm bath, on the other hand, has these objections, that, as the greater part of bathing-rooms in private houses cannot be warmed, one can easily catch cold on leaving the bathing tub. Besides the plain warm bath, on the whole, relaxes the skin, and therefore, renders it inclined to taking colds. CONSIDERATIONS, as these, caused us to look around for another kind of baths, which would obviate the objections to both, cold and tepid baths, and yet effect the cleansing and strengthening of the body. In the vapor-bath, and especially in the so-called Russian, we found both objects realized. No other bath than the vapor-bath is able, so completely and thoroughly to loosen the accumulated perspiration, dust, &c. &c. It is owing to this, that this kind of bath is in so general a use in Europe, and is, especially in winter, preferred to all other modes of bathing. In this country, however, strange to say, the prejudice still exists among almost all classes, that no vapor-bath must be taken during the winter, because one can so easily catch cold after it. This is a very mischievous error of judgment, as in consequence of it many are deterred from seeking and finding health and strength in these baths. And yet

does experience as well as science teach us the very opposite, namely, that at no other season of the year does the vapor-bath work more beneficially than just in cold or damp weather; a fact which can be easily accounted for. For, whenever damp or wet and cold air prevails, the activity of the skin is checked, that is, it does not exude to such a degree as is the case in a more dry and warm air. Owing to this, one feels uneasy and has a certain heaviness in the limbs. Now, if a vapor-bath be taken under such conditions, it would stimulate the action of the skin, promote the circulation of the blood, and the whole body would feel at ease, and quite refreshed. This fact is long and well known in Europe, and hence in damp and cold days the vapor-baths are well frequented.

Now, as to catching cold after a vapor-bath, we want to give to nervous persons the most complete assurance, that this is almost impossible, when the bath is taken in a properly and scientifically constructed Russian vapor-bath, and this more than all else places the Russian bath above every other bath. For it is not only a vapor-bath, but also in part a water-bath, as water, partly cold, partly tepid, is applied in the shape of affusions, &c.

As soon as the vapor has rendered the skin somewhat slack and lax, and the pulse quick, then the cold affusions (and in the case of persons not accustomed to cold water, the tepid ones) slacken the quickened pulse, cool the skin, and strengthen and freshen it. The hot vapors had opened the pores, the cold affusions close them again, and thus protect the body from catching any cold.

What! cold affusions? Cold water on the sweating body? Would not a person be struck with apoplexy on the spot? Well, many have asked this question, and the opponents of the vapor-bath have long enough made use of this stratagem, to frighten thousands of people from the use of it. Experience, however, furnishes the best answer to this question.

If really the application of cold water should in the least degree be dangerous, would there not, almost every day, accidents happen in Germany, France, &c. But, how is it in reality? The answer which, perhaps, may take unbelieving persons by surprise, is, that in Europe, where every day thousands of people of both sexes seek and find refreshment and cure in the Russian vapor-baths, there *never as yet happened an accident*. And how

would a Russian smile at such an anxious solicitude, who is accustomed to run out from his sweating-booth and jump into the river (on account of which in Russian villages they like to erect a sweating-booth near a river), or in winter to roll in the snow, after which operation he hastens back to the bath, in order to evoke more perspiration. Though to many this might appear quite strange, yet it is very easily accounted for; but it would lead us too far from our subject should we try to elucidate this matter any further. Suffice it for our readers to remark, what we can prove by our own experience, that cold (respectively tepid) shower-baths do not only not injure, but even strengthen and refresh us greatly. Of course measure must be kept in this as in the temperature of the bath itself. It is therefore necessary, that the waiters in the vapor baths, who in this respect are likely to go to extremes, be put under the strict supervision of a directing physician, who is to give them the necessary instructions. In this point a great mistake was formerly committed in Germany and other countries, that establishments of this kind were almost without any exception in the hands of persons, not possessing any medical knowledge, who left to their waiters, still less versed in such matters, the entire treatment of the bathers. The consequence of which is, that in such establishments the waiters, according to the whims and likings of the guests, make the bath either too cold or too hot, or torment them frequently with too many or too powerful affusions. Very recently this nuisance has partly been abated by physicians taking the direction of such establishments and putting a stop to such barbarous manipulations. Hence the confidence of the public has turned especially to such vapor-baths, as are under the supervision of a physician, and the number of guests frequenting them, has increased to a great extent, as appears from the reports of these physicians. Now, if we commend to our readers the use of vapor baths, especially in the cold season of the year, we do so of course under the supposition that an establishment of this kind gives complete satisfaction, and guarantee both in regard to a medical and a technical point of view.

In the first place, the bath-room should be high and large, in order that the vapors may be uniformly distributed and do not check or impede breathing, as is the case in those small and badly ventilated vapor-baths with low ceilings, which may more

properly be called sweating-booths. These, indeed, make a bad impression on the bather, whereas, in a high and cheerful bath-room, heated to a moderate temperature, one feels quite comfortable and at ease. In addition to this, there ought to be at least three other rooms, in one of which are beds, where the bather for a few minutes takes a light second sweating, in the second room he dresses himself, and in the third he sits down for a few minutes, to cool off. If then he leaves the establishment, he is so cooled off, that he cannot, by any means, take cold.

In the manner here indicated, are nearly all the Russian vapor-baths in Germany constructed. Being admirers of such baths, we were agreeably surprised to see the opening of an establishment of this kind announced under the direction of a German physician. Not without some misgiving, we confess, so easily accounted for, (as in a country so full of humbug we are not always prepared to find any thing *genuine and thorough*), we went to the Russian Vapor-baths of Dr. Gutmann, at 313 Fourth Street, and were truly astonished to find our expectations far surpassed, as we do not remember to have seen, even in a large number of European capitals, an establishment so convenient and so scientifically arranged. Moreover, the careful and correct treatment of the guests on the part of the waiters, shows that the hand of an able physician directs the establishment.

Now if we commend these baths to persons in health for the only purpose of cleanliness and refreshment, we, of course, urge them so much more upon suffering humanity, as in several diseases, *viz.*, inveterate rheumatism, cutaneous eruptions, &c., &c., they often prove the only remedy left.

In Europe it is the general custom and practice, that those patients who, on account of such complaints, during the summer visit the watering places, use these vapor-baths in the winter as a means of a subsequent cure.

